

August 10, 2005

Public Session

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Wedge, at 7:05 PM. The following members were present:

**Ms. Sylvia Wedge, Chair
Gleason**

Mrs. Terri Cortvriend

Ms. Karen

Mr. Terrence Kavanagh, V. Chair

Mr. David Croston

Mrs. Marge Levesque

Mr. Douglas Wilkey, Clerk

Also Present: Dr. Susan Lusi, Colleen Jermain, Cynthia Brown, Patti Cofield

1. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Ms. Wedge welcomed Marjorie Levesque to the School Committee.

Ms. Wedge stated that she attended the Attorney General's Open Government Summit at Roger Williams University's School of Law on Friday, August 5th, with Mrs. Cofield and Mr. Croston. She reported that pursuant to Rhode Island General Law 36-14-6, when a committee member has a conflict of interest and recuses him/herself

from participating in the discussion or taking official action relating to a particular issue, they must also submit a Statement of Conflict of Interest form to the Ethics Commission. Mrs. Cofield will have copies of the form available at every School Committee meeting.

Ms. Wedge stated that she will be conferring with the Administration on what subcommittees the School Committee needs to have going forward. After the structure is decided, she will talk with each member of the School Committee about their particular interests prior to making subcommittee assignments.

Ms. Wedge also read a thank you note from former superintendent, Timothy Ryan.

2. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Lusi welcomed Mrs. Levesque to the School Committee.

Dr. Lusi distributed a letter from Atty. Updegrave regarding the request to move the Melville School traffic signal. The legal opinion states that the School Committee has no power to require the relocation and/or replacement of the traffic light, nor should the School Committee be responsible for the cost thereof. Atty. Updegrave suggests that the School Committee simply endorse the concepts in Deputy Chief Hebert's letter and refer Mr. Vitkevich to either the Planning Board or the Town Council. Dr. Lusi will put a

motion to endorse the concepts in Deputy Chief Hebert's letter on a future agenda. She will also inform Mr. Vitkevich of the legal opinion.

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Dr. Lusi reported that Administration has been working hard to identify the whys and wherefores of the FY 2004-05 budget deficit and to develop proposals for steps that should be taken in the future regarding greater budgetary controls. A series of Finance Subcommittee meetings is in process.

Dr. Lusi gave an update on purchasing AEDs for every school prior to the start of school. Asst. Supt. Jermain has determined that the cost of this purchase would be approximately \$17,000. Dr. Lusi is not comfortable recommending the unbudgeted expenditure for AEDs at this time, given the budget issues, and asked for direction from the School Committee. Ms. Gleason asked that Asst. Supt. Jermain discuss the additional expense of AED training at the next meeting and put the issue on the second meeting agenda in September. Dr. Lusi concurred.

Dr. Lusi reported that she received a letter from Mr. Eric Gross of

Girls and Boys Town providing us with a timeline for the opening of the homes. She stated that the School Committee and Town Council will need to request a supplemental budget appropriation from the state in order to receive Group Home reimbursements for this school year, 2005-06. A supplemental budget appropriation will also need to be requested for the 2006-07 school year because of legislation that was passed in this last legislative session. Dr. Lusi recommended that the Administration, working with Mrs. Wedge, draft a joint letter from the School committee and Town Council to the Commissioner of Education requesting a supplemental appropriation for this year. She also recommended that we work with our legislators to change the legislation so that there is a required mid-year adjustment going forward.

Dr. Lusi also reported that Asst. Supt. Jermain and Mrs. Brown hosted a new teacher orientation on August 10th. The orientation for all teachers will be held on the morning of August 29th at Portsmouth High School. All School Committee members are invited to attend.

a) Teaching and Learning: Asst. Supt. Jermain reported that the new teacher orientation went very well. She built on Dr. Lusi's comments at the orientation, speaking on the importance of teacher quality, what it means to be a part of Portsmouth, and how important it is to model the beliefs we expect, as well as continuing the effort on collaboration and continuous learning.

Asst. Supt. Jermain also reported that she is finalizing the professional development day in August and described what will be focused on at all levels. She is making sure that the teachers have what they need to get started in September and that our assessment schedules are in place.

b) Finance and Operations: Mrs. Brown reported that the School Committee policies, the 504 Plan, and the Crisis Plan were reviewed at the new teacher orientation. Mr. Elmasian spoke about state and regulatory inspections, pest control, and security.

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Mrs. Brown reported that salary and benefits are being looked at very closely in this year's budget. Mrs. Brown reported that we are in the process of scheduling meetings with Special Education to review both students and staff for the upcoming year so that what we have in our budget is reflective of that information.

The Portsmouth Middle School septic project is almost complete. The contractor has a deadline of August 15th to complete it. The communication panel that signals potential problems needs to be installed and tested. The issue of change orders that were approved by the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee Chair was discussed.

Ms. Gleason requested that further information on this matter be presented to the School Committee.

Ms. Wedge inquired about the work to be done in the Boys' Locker Room at Portsmouth High School in order to be in compliance with Title IX. Mrs. Brown stated that we do not need to address it until the mid-year point and that the work could be done over the holiday break in December. In-house maintenance staff would do the work, and it would be a very nominal expense.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Kavanagh and seconded by Mr. Croston to approve the minutes of the meeting held July 19, 2005. So voted 6-0-1. Mrs. Levesque abstained.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Lusi removed Items d) and i) from the agenda.

a) Teacher Resignation. The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee accepts the resignation of Jennifer M. Copeland from the position of Modern Language teacher at Portsmouth Middle School, effective im-mediately."

b) Guidance Counselor Resignation. The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, “that the Committee accepts the resignation of Robert V. McMullen from the position of Guidance Counselor at Portsmouth High School, effective im-mediately.”

c) Appt. – Art Teacher, PHS. The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent’s appointment, Recom-mendation #1-8/10/05, to the position of Art Teacher at Portsmouth High School, effective August 29, 2005.”

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d) Appt. – Librarian, PHS. The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent’s appointment, Recom-mendation #2-8/10/05, to the position of Librarian at Portsmouth High School, effective August 29, 2005.”

e) Appt. – Guidance Counselor, PHS. The Superintendent

recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #3-8/10/05, to the position of Guidance Counselor at Portsmouth High School, effective August 29, 2005." (Backup to Follow)

f) Appt. – Grade 7 Social Studies Teacher, PMS (1-year position). The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #4-8/10/05, to the 1-year position of Grade 7 Social Studies Teacher at Portsmouth Middle School, for the 2005-06 school year."

g) Appt. – Grade 7 Science Teacher, Part-time, PMS. The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #5-8/10/05, to the position of Grade 7 Science Teacher, part-time, at Portsmouth Middle School, effective August 29, 2005."

h) Appt. – Grade 5 Teacher, Part-time, PMS. The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #6-8/10/05, to the position of Grade 5 Teacher, part-time, at Portsmouth Middle School, effective August 29, 2005."

i) Appt. – Grade 8 House Leader, PMS. The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #7-8/10/05, to the position of Grade 8 House Leader at Portsmouth Middle School, for the 2005-06 school year."

j) Approval of Requests for Permission to Home School. The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee approves the requests to provide home schooling for the 2005-06 school year for students HS#1 through HS#5-8/10/05, as listed in the confidential memo dated August 5, 2005, in accordance with the provisions of R.I. Law 16-19-2."

A motion was made by Mr. Kavanagh to approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of Items d) and i). Seconded by Mr. Croston. So voted 7-0.

Dr. Lusi announced the following appointments:

c) Shannon Pearson, Art Teacher, PHS, Step 3

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e) Melissa Belloti, Guidance Counselor, PHS, Step 4M

- f) Jody Cicchese, Grade 7 Social Studies Teacher, PMS, Step 3**
- g) Kathleen Wall, Grade 7 Science Teacher, Part-time, PMS, Step 2**
- h) Suzanne Hole, Grade 5 Teacher, Part-time, PMS, Step 2**

Dr. Lusi also announced the resignations of Jennifer Copeland, PMS Modern Language Teacher; and Robert McMullan, PHS Guidance Counselor.

5. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Wedge stated that both subcommittees have on-going issues and will not report at this meeting.

a) Buildings and Grounds. The Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee will be entering into negotiations with the three lowest bidders on the gym construction project next Tuesday, August 16th, 5:00 PM, in the Portsmouth Room, 2nd Floor, at Town Hall. Dr. Lusi stated that she is going to make sure we are in compliance and have Rhode Island Department of Education's approval for our proposed gym.

b) Finance Subcommittee. The Finance Subcommittee will meet on Friday, August 12th, at 9:00 AM, and Wednesday, August 17th, at 4:30 PM.

The Town Council has scheduled a workshop on Monday, August

29th, to discuss the gym and budget issues.

A motion was made by Mr. Kavanagh and seconded by Mr. Croston to adjourn the meeting. So voted 7-0. Public Session adjourned at 8:29 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Cofield

Recording Secretary for

Douglas Wilkey, Clerk